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Grizzly hurdling ace Fox is more serious now that he has a track to run on

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GRIZZLY HURDLING ACE FOX
IS MORE SERIOUS NOW THAT
HE HAS A TRACK TO RUN ON
guffey/jg

MISSOULA--

Tim Fox doesn't give up easily.

The University of Montana track standout has had one kind of problem or another throughout his successful track career.

At Hardin High School, in Hardin, Montana, his school's track was so overgrown that his team could not hold meets there, let alone practice on the facility.

So to workout in his specialty, the 120 high hurdles, Fox and his prep coach, Laurie Nelson, measured off 120 yards in the school's parking lot so he would have a place to run.

"It worked out pretty well, really," said Fox, a 20-year-old junior at UM. "I remember once I ran a 14.7 on the parking lot, between buses. That asphalt was good for fast times."

Undaunted by the lack of a "real" track to work out on, Fox went on to have an excellent career as a prep. In the state meets he fell down in the hurdles his freshman season, but the next year he won the low hurdles; placed second in the highs and lows as a junior; and was unbeaten in the highs and lost only once in the lows his senior year.

Facilities wasn't Fox's biggest problem as a high school athlete. Cockiness, lack of interest, call it what you will, Fox admitted he wasn't too dedicated.

"I missed a lot of practice," he said. "I was still naive, and really didn't know what I could do if I set my mind to do it. I guess you could say I was pretty cocky. I was afraid to practice (the hurdles) until my senior year."

But, when he decided to get serious that final year in high school, it paid

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GRIZZLY HURDLING ACE FOX IS MORE SERIOUS NOW

off. He tied the state record in the highs (14.4), a mark he shares with Roy Robinson and Bob Tobin. Robinson, from Glasgow, is the Grizzly record holder in the highs (14.0), while Tobin, from Great Falls, is a teammate of Fox's this season. (Fox also ran the 100, 220 and 440 in high school).

This season the 6-1, 165-pound geology major (he hopes to enter law school eventually) has been plagued by leg injuries, but never-the-less is ranked among the best in the Big Sky Conference in the 110-meter hurdles and the intermediate hurdles.

He is currently tied for second in the highs with a best of 14.3, just one-tenth a second off the leader. In the intermediates, a race relatively new to him, he is fifth (53.79), less than a second off the leader's time.

He ran a 14.2 in the highs as a frosh, but an ankle injury slowed him down for the conference meet (he was fifth). Last year he was fourth in the highs and in second place in the IH, until he tripped over a hurdle and fell, failing to finish.

"I'm a bit disappointed," he admitted. "I could have done better the past couple of years. But, I'm starting to feel better this season. I'm happy with a 14.3 (his best this season), and I think I'll peak for the Big Sky meet (May 21-22 in Boise, Idaho). I need to work on my form--but I'll be ready."

Fox, who said he would have attended BYU if he hadn't chosen Montana, said he has set a couple of goals this year.

"I want to win the highs and the intermediates in the conference and go to the Nationals," he said. "We're (the UM team) competing very well this year. If anyone has a letdown in the Big Sky meet it won't be us."

"I think Tim has to be one of the best hurdlers in the conference," said head coach Marshall Clark. "He has a tough challenge to win both events. He has raw talent to compete against in the high's in (Paul) Wilson (of Idaho State) and Dale (Giem) his teammate in the intermediates. With Tim and Dale and our other hurdlers it gives us a very healthy situation in those events."

Lack of facilities, attitude and health problems are all things Tim Fox has overcome in the past few years--he doesn't know how to give up.

"I've grown up a lot the past couple of years," he reflected. "Now I realize you have to pay the price to get what you want."

NOTE: Fox recently (5-5-79) ran a 14.2 in a meet in Seattle, to tie for the conference lead in the highs, and match his best time ever in the event.

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